THE MAD STRANGLER OF BUDAPEST

A True Crime Story from 1912

The MAD STRANGLER OF BUDAPEST

I HATE ALL WOMEN! THEY ARE FIT ONLY TO DIE!

NO, BELA, NO! DON'T KILL ME, PLEASE, PLEASE!!

A 1000% UNDOUBTED CRIME CLASSIC

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE NAME, BELA KISS, ALL NAMES USED IN THIS TRUE STORY ARE FICTITIOUS

THIS IS THE TRUE, GRISLY, UNSOLVED MYSTERY OF BELA KISS, THE HUNGARIAN TINSMITH, WHOSE BLAZING LOVE FOR HIS BEAUTIFUL WIFE SUDDENLY TURNED INTO A MURDEROUS HATRED FOR ALL WOMEN.

OUR STORY OPENS IN THE LITTLE RESORT TOWN OF CZINKOTA, HUNGARY, IN 1912...

COME, MY SARI, KISS ME, ONCE MORE, THEN I MUST PACK FOR MY TRIP!

BELA, MY HUSBAND, YOU LEAVE ME SO OFTEN! I GROW SO LONELY!

I KNOW, SARI, MY SWEET! BUT IF I AM TO MAKE A LIVING I MUST CONTINUE TRAVELING INTO BUDAPEST AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK!

I KNOW, I KNOW, BELA! I AM BEING UNFAIR TO YOU!

I WILL BE BACK IN TWO DAYS, MY SWEET! I WILL THINK ONLY OF YOU.. AND MY LOVE FOR YOU! IF YOU WERE EVER TO LOOK AT ANOTHER I WOULD GO CRAZY!

BELA, BELA, YOU MUST NEVER SUSPECT SUCH A HORRIBLE THING OF ME!

BUT, AS BELA KISS ROARED OFF IN HIS HIGH-POWERED CAR..

PAUL, MY DARLING, BELA HAS JUST LEFT FOR BUDAPEST! HURRY OVER.. I AM DYING FOR THE SWEETNESS OF YOUR KISS!

SARI, I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOUR CALL! I WILL BE OVER BEFORE YOU CAN HANG UP THE PHONE!

AND ON THE ROAD TO BUDAPEST, AS SARI KISS COMPLETED HER CALL...

POOR SARI, ALONE AGAIN TONIGHT. SUCH A GOOD WOMAN..SO WONDERFUL..PERHAPS I'M BEING UNFAIR... NOT TAKING HER ON MY TRIPS WITH ME.

...OR IS SHE SO GOOD? HOW CAN I KNOW SHE'S TRUE TO ME? IF..IF SHE ISN'T... BUT NO, I CAN'T THINK OF SUCH A THING! I'D GO INSANE IF I DID!

HIS BUSINESS IN THE CAPITAL COMPLETED, HERR KISS RETURNED TO CZINKOTA, BUT, AS HE REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE...

ACH, WHAT LUCK! THE MOTOR IS DEAD! AND WHERE COULD I GET A MECHANIC THIS TIME OF NIGHT? I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE THE CAR HERE AND WALK HOME! LUCKY I'M SO NEAR!

MINUTES LATER AS BELA KISS APPROACHED HIS HOME...

AHH...HOME AGAIN...WHAT'S THAT? SARI...IN ANOTHER MAN'S ARMS! NO! NO!

IT'S PAUL BINHARS...MY BEST FRIEND! HE AND SARI ARE CARRYING ON AN AFFAIR! I..I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... BUT I MUST!

SO, MY WIFE, THIS IS THE WAY YOU PINE FOR ME WHILE I AM GONE!

BELA, MY HUSBAND, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? YOU... YOU'RE ALL WRONG! PAUL JUST DROPPED IN, LOOKING FOR YOU!

BELA, MY FRIEND, YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND! ALL RIGHT, I WILL GO!

BAH, YOU INVITED HIM OVER! YOU'RE A WORTHLESS CHEATING WOMAN! GET OUT PAUL..GET OUT, BEFORE I LOSE MY TEMPER!

BELA, YOU ARE A FOOL! I'M LEAVING.. LEAVING YOU FOREVER!

HMMM...MY LITTLE CHEAT, YOU GIVE ME AN IDEA! YES, YOU WILL LEAVE ME... FOREVER!

BELA, BELA! YOU HAVE GONE CRAZY! D..DON'T..DON'T HURT ME!

HURT YOU? JUST FOR A LITTLE TIME, MY DARLING! THEN YOU WILL NEVER KNOW HURT AGAIN!

BELA...BELA..(GASP). YOU (GASP) ARE KILLING ME...

YES, YES, I AM KILLING YOU.. CHOKING YOU TO DEATH, MY PRETTY!

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THERE, MY SARI, YOU ARE DEAD.. YOU DESERVE IT.. ALL WOMEN DESERVE TO DIE! THEY ARE SIRENS.. THEY LEAD MEN ON.. THEY CHEAT.. THEY MAKE MOCKERIES OF SOLEMN VOWS! I WILL SPEND MY DAYS GETTING EVEN WITH WOMEN... BY KILLING EVERY ONE I CAN!!

I MUST PLAN, FIGURE, THINK.. FIND A WAY TO LURE THE DEADLY FEMALE INTO MY CLUTCHES!

I'VE GOT IT.. A PLAN.. A PLAN! MY OLD INTEREST IN PREDICTING THE FUTURE THROUGH THE CRYSTAL BALL! ALL WOMEN ARE INTERESTED IN THE FUTURE.. I CAN GAIN THEIR CONFIDENCE BY OFFERING TO PREDICTING THEIR FUTURE, FOR THEM!

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I SHALL LEAVE FOR BUDAPEST AT ONCE...AS SOON AS MY CAR IS REPAIRED! I SHALL MAKE MY HATRED FOR WOMEN PAY OFF... IN GRIM SATISFACTION FOR ME, BELA KISS!

A FEW DAYS LATER, IN THE OFFICES OF A BUDAPEST NEWSPAPER...

YES, I WANT TO INSERT AN AD THAT READS, "BELA KISS, FAMOUS SEER, WILL PREDICT YOUR FUTURE BY GAZING INTO HIS CRYSTAL BALL.. REPLY IN PERSON AT 177 BRASNOW PLACE!"

CLASSIFIED ADS TAKEN HERE BUDAPEST HERA

THAT AD WILL BRING ME PLENTY OF FOOL WOMEN! THEY'LL ALL BE INTERESTED IN THEIR FUTURE...AND I WILL PREDICT IT ACCURATELY... IT WILL BE A GRAVE!

CLASSIFIED ADS TAKEN HERE BUDAPEST HE

BELA'S PREDICTIONS WERE SOUNDLY FOUNDED, FOR, THE NEXT DAY...

OH, AH, HERR KISS, WHEN CAN YOU READ MY FUTURE IN THE CRYSTAL BALL?

I'M SORRY, MADAMOISELLE, I GIVE READINGS ONLY BY APPOINTMENT! I SHALL TAKE YOUR NAME AND TELL YOU WHEN YOU MAY SEE ME!

A HALF-HOUR LATER, AS THE LAST OF THE FRENZIED WOMEN LEFT...

AHH! WHAT A START FOR MY PLANS! NAMES, ADDRESSES OF DOZENS OF YOUNG, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN! YES, YES, IT'S ONLY THE YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL I WANT TO WREAK MY VENGEANCE ON...

THE NEXT DAY, AT A NEAT LODGING HOUSE, NEAR BELA KISS'S QUARTERS...

YOU ARE MADAMOISELLE FRANZEN, YES? YOU WILL BE AT MY APARTMENT AT SEVEN THIS EVENING! I HAVE DECIDED TO GRANT YOU A CONSULTATION AND LET YOU FIND OUT WHAT THE CRYSTAL BALL PREDICTS FOR YOU!

OHHH! HERR KISS! THIS... THIS IS WONDERFUL! I SHALL BE THERE, PROMPTLY!

YES.. I SHALL KILL YOU! I HATE ALL NOMEN, PARTICULARLY BEAUTIFUL NOMEN SUCH AS YOU! THIS IS YOUR FUTURE.. DEATH.. IT'S WHAT ALL WOMEN DESERVE!

NO! NO! OHHHH, PLEASE! AGHHH...

I HAVE DONE IT! I HAVE KILLED ONE MORE WOMAN.. IT'S ONE LESS WORTHLESS CREATURE TO TORTURE MEN.. TO DRIVE THEM CRAZY!

AHHH, I CAN CROSS IRENEE FRANZEN OFF MY LIST! NOW I WILL PICK OUT MY SECOND VICTIM! BUT BEFORE I LURE THE SECOND ONE TO HER DEATH I MUST DISPOSE OF THE BODY OF IRENEE! IT WILL BE SIMPLE... I SHALL TAKE THE BODY TO CZINKOTA IN MY CAR!

AT SEVEN THAT EVENING...

NOW, MADAMOISELLE, I MUST HAVE COMPLETE SILENCE WHILE I CONCENTRATE ON THE CRYSTAL BALL, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

YES, YES, I WILL COOPERATE ENTIRELY, HERR KISS.

I SEE... IN THE CRYSTAL BALL... GRAVE DANGER FOR YOU.. EVEN LOSS OF YOUR LIFE... FROM A MIDDLE AGED, DARK MAN... YOU...

WHAT IS THAT? YOU MEAN... I AM TO HAVE TROUBLE?

YES... TROUBLE.. BUT ONLY BRIEFLY... THEN DEATH SHALL RELEASE YOU FROM ALL TROUBLE!

THAT CORD! YOU.. YOU'RE A MADMAN! YOU WANT TO KILL ME!

BY 1914 THE POLICE OF BUDAPEST WERE FRANTIC...

EVERYONE IS ON 24 HOUR DUTY UNTIL THIS FIENDISH STRANGLER IS CAUGHT! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I'VE HAD MY MEN ON THE ALERT FOR OVER A YEAR!

THE UNIFORMED MEN HAVE BEEN TOO!

WELL, YOU HAVEN'T CAUGHT THIS MONSTER YET! HE'S KILLED LORD KNOWS HOW MANY WOMEN BESIDES THE EIGHT BODIES WE'VE DISCOVERED! HE'S PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISAPPEARANCES OF A DOZEN GIRLS REPORTED TO THE MISSING PERSONS BUREAU!

AND, A FEW DAYS LATER, AT BELA KISS'S HOUSE IN CZINKOTA...

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU SIR, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME MYSTERIOUS TALK IN THE VILLAGE CONCERNING YOU! WITH THIS WAVE OF MISSING AND STRANGLED GIRLS WE'VE BEEN ORDERED TO FOLLOW EVERY LEAD!

COME RIGHT IN, OFFICER! I HAVE NOTHING TO CONCEAL!

SO, THIS TIN OF ALCOHOL WILL MAKE A PERFECT RESTING PLACE FOR THE BODY OF THAT FOOL IRENEE! FORTUNATELY, MY OLD TRADE OF TINSMITH WILL ENABLE ME TO SOLDER THE TOP BACK ONTO THE TIN SO NO ONE WOULD EVER SUSPECT IT HAD BEEN REMOVED ONCE!

AN HOUR LATER...

IT'S FINISHED! ANOTHER TIN COFFIN TO STAND NEXT TO THAT ONE... WHICH SO FITTINGLY CONCEALS SARI'S REMAINS! AND THERE SHALL MORE ALCOHOL DRUMS.. EACH WITH A BEAUTIFUL **DEAD** WOMAN IN IT!

FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS...

AHHH, HERR KISS! WHAT ARE THOSE TIN-DRUMS? HMMM, THEY COULD CONCEAL A BODY!

THOSE? OH, MY FRIEND, THOSE ARE DRUMS OF PETROL! I HAD A CHANCE TO PICK UP A SUPPLY FROM A DEALER IN BUDAPEST WHO HAD GONE BANKRUPT!

YES, I CAN SEE I WAS MISTAKEN! THE TOPS OF THOSE DRUMS HAVE NEVER BEEN REMOVED! WE SHALL GO NOW, AND PARDON THE TROUBLE OUR VISIT HAS CAUSED!

NO TROUBLE AT ALL! (NO.. NO TROUBLE, BUT ALMOST PLENTY OF TROUBLE! THIS IS A CLOSE CALL, I'LL HAVE TO LAY LOW FROM NOW ON! IF ONLY THERE WAS SOME WAY I COULD DROP OUT OF SIGHT WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION!

YES, I MUST LEAVE THE COUNTRY! PERHAPS, IN A FEW YEARS, IT WILL BE SAFE TO RESUME MY KILLINGS! THEN... WHAT'S THAT?..

EXTRA! EXTRA! WAR DECLARED! ALL TROOPS BEING CALLED UP!

DRAFT LAW TO GO INTO EFFECT TODAY!

WAR? NO!

FIGHTING FRANCE!

ENGLAND!

THIS IS MY SOLUTION! I WILL VOLUNTEER FOR THE ARMY! THE POLICE WILL NEVER LOOK FOR THE BRUTAL STRANGLER SERVING AS A PATRIOTIC CITIZEN.. OFFERING HIS LIFE IN BATTLE!

WAR!

AND SO, A FEW MONTHS LATER

I'VE THROWN THE POLICE COMPLETELY OFF MY TRAIL! AND AFTER THE WAR..,WELL... I CAN CHOKE THE LIFE OUT OF MORE BEAUTIFUL WOMEN! I CAN MAKE THEM PAY FOR THE WAY THEY'VE MADE ME SUFFER!

THEN, WITH BELA'S REGIMENT ALREADY IN COMBAT..

PRIVATE KISS, I HAVE JUST RETURNED FROM REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS! I HEARD THERE THE BUDAPEST POLICE WERE INQUIRING ABOUT YOU!

ABOUT ME? BUT WHY? (AS THOUGH I DIDN'T KNOW WHY! I'M TRAPPED, UNLESS I CAN FIGURE OUT SOMETHING RIGHT THIS MINUTE! TRAPPED!)

AS BELA QUAKED, A SOLUTION TO HIS PROBLEM SUDDENLY APPEARED!

MEN, I WANT VOLUNTEERS FOR A DANGEROUS PATROL..I WARN YOU, YOU MAY NEVER COME BACK!

I'LL GO, LIEUTENANT!

ME TOO!

I'LL VOLUNTEER, SIR! (IT'S DANGEROUS, BUT IT'S A WAY TO ELUDE THE POLICE UNTIL I CAN FIGURE SOMETHING ELSE!)

AS THE PATROL CREPT THROUGH EERIE BLACKNESS INTO ENEMY TERRITORY...

DOWN! DOWN! LOOK OUT FOR SHRAPNEL!

UMM, THIS GIVES ME A BRILLIANT IDEA! AFTER THE NEXT BLAST OF SHELL FIRE I SHALL BE OFFICALLY DEAD!

A MINUTE LATER..

NOW, NOW! AH, A SMALL PRESSURE ON THE TRIGGER..AND BELA KISS BECOMES A DEAD MAN.. A CASUALTY OF WAR!

UNHHHH! AGHHHH!

BANG!

HERR SCHMIDT HAS BEEN HIT. YOU GO AHEAD.. I WILL HELP HIM!

JA, JA, DO NOT LEAVE HIM TO DIE ALONE!

I..I DIE.. DIE..DIE.. AGGGH!

YES..YOU DIE..BUT YOU WILL BE WEARING MY IDENTIFICATION TAGS! EVERYONE WILL THINK I DIED..BECAUSE YOU WILL BE PICKED UP BY THE MEDICAL MEN...WHO DON'T KNOW EITHER OF US!

NOW I'M FREE OF MY FEARS...SOON THERE SHALL BE A REPORT LISTING ME AS A BATTLE CASUALTY! I SHALL MAKE MY WAY THROUGH THE LINES... AND DESERT THE ARMY..

WHEN THE PATROL RETURNED AT DAWN THE NEXT DAY.

PRIVATES SCHMIDT AND KISS MISSING IN ACTION, SIR. BOTH BELIEVED DEAD!

AHH, THAT IS TOO BAD, SERGEANT, TOO BAD!

PERHAPS, AS FAR AS KISS IS CONCERNED IT IS A BETTER WAY OUT! THE BUDAPEST POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR HIM ON MURDER CHARGES ANYWAY!

THAT MAN A MURDERER, NO! HE WAS TOO BRAVE!! REMEMBER, HE VOLUNTEERED FOR THIS PATROL.

AND MEANWHILE IN A BUDAPEST CAFE...

OFFICIALLY I'M DEAD, SO THE ARMY WILL NOT HUNT ME DOWN AS A DESERTER! ALSO BECAUSE I'M DEAD, THE POLICE WILL CLOSE MY FILE! SO..I CAN LIVE RIGHT HERE IN BUDAPEST THE REST OF MY LIFE.. WITH NO FEARS!

AND SO, BELA KISS DISAPPEARED, BUT, A FEW MONTHS LATER, AT THE BUDAPEST POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

..HE..HE..(SOB)..OFFERED TO READ MY FUTURE IN THE CRYSTAL BALL..(SOB) THEN..HE TRIED TO CHOKE ME..I SCREAMED.. AND...

CRYSTAL BALL! STRANGLER? THAT SOUNDS LIKE BELA KISS!

HMMM, ACCORDING TO OUR REPORTS, BELA KISS WAS KILLED IN THE WAR! SERGEANT, CONTACT THE MEDICAL SQUAD OF KISS'S REGIMENT! I WANT SOME INFORMATION ON HIS DEATH!

YES, INSPECTOR, I HAVE CHECKED THE RECORDS CONCERNING THE LATE PRIVATE KISS..I HAVE CONTACTED THE MEDICS WHO BROUGHT HIS BODY IN. THEY REPORTED HE WAS A MAN OF ABOUT TWENTY!

TWENTY! BELA KISS WAS AT LEAST FORTY! THIS WHOLE THING IS A RUSE.. HE ISN'T DEAD AT ALL. HE JUST SWITCHED IDENTIFICATION WITH A MAN WHO WAS DEAD! I'M GOING TO THROW OUT A COUNTRY-WIDE DRAGNET!

BUT, EVEN AS THE BUDAPEST POLICE WENT INTO ACTION...

I'VE GOT TO HIDE.. GET OUT OF BUDAPEST! AFTER MUFFING THAT STRANGLING LAST NIGHT IT ISN'T SAFE HERE! THAT GIRL MUST HAVE GONE TO THE POLICE!

AND BELA KISS *DID* DROP FROM SIGHT.. IN SPITE OF THE RELENTLESS EFFORTS OF THE BUDAPEST POLICE.

EIGHTEEN MONTHS YOU'VE SEARCHED. AND YOU HAVEN'T TURNED UP A SINGLE CLUE!

INSPECTOR, BELA KISS HAS DISAPPEARED AS COMPLETELY AS IF HE *REALLY* WERE DEAD, MAYBE HE IS!!

UNTIL WE FIND A BODY WE'LL ASSUME BELA KISS STILL LIVES.. AND KILLS.. I'LL GET OUT A WORLD-WIDE DRAGNET! HAVE DESCRIPTIONS OF HIM SENT TO EVERY COUNTRY! HE CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THIS!

THE MAJOR CITIES OF EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WERE ALERTED TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR BELA KISS, BUT, IN 1920, FIVE YEARS AFTER HIS DISAPPEARANCE..

INSPECTOR, BELA KISS JUST *CAN'T* BE FOUND! I'M CONVINCED HE'S DEAD!

MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, GREGOR! FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR WOMENFOLK ... I *HOPE* SO!!

TWO VICTIMS OF AUSTRIAN MANIAC STRANGLER FOUND

SCOT... CHOKED TO...

DAILY ... NEWS

CHICAGO ... STRANGL...

Los Angeles ... Herald

FINAL

LOS ANGELES WOMAN STRANGLED

BUT *IS* BELA KISS DEAD? OR DOES HE STILL LIVE AND KILL, ROAMING THE WORLD, MAKING INNOCENT WOMEN VICTIMS OF HIS CRAZED HATRED? THIS IS ONE OF THE GREAT UNSOLVED CASES OF CRIMINAL HISTORY! WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE ANSWER?

THE SHOCKING TRUE STORY OF BÉLA KISS

He murdered his wives and many others... then vanished without a wmacln trace. The chilling real-life case that horrified Hungary in 1912.

From the pages of Candid Tales – True Crime Edition